



## New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Subchapter:	4	Field Training	
Issuance:	100	Field Training Unit (Local Office)	

### Purpose:

This issuance establishes the policies and procedures relating to the Field Training Unit, CP&P, and local office staff.

### Policy:

#### A) Overview of the Field Training Unit Model

Each Local Office will establish Field Training Unit(s) according to the guidelines in this policy. The Field Training Unit composed of **seven New Workers or less**, is a functioning unit where the New Worker reports and works on field days during the entire Pre-Service Training period and for a period of approximately six months from the start of employment.

#### B) Role of the Field Training Unit

The Field Training Unit will:

- Develop New Workers into well-rounded Workers, suitable for transfer in 6 months (or slightly less time if the New Worker shows exceptional progress as outlined in this policy) to regular units within the Local Office,
- Support a Local Office's overall effort to train New Workers, and
- Provide internships for BSWs and MSWs, if appropriate.

#### C) Field Training Supervisor and the New Worker

During the New Worker's assignment to the unit, the Supervisor ensures the New Worker is familiar with:

- The work site; and
- Local Office procedures and systems; and
- The professional office environment.

The professional environment which includes:

- Community programs and partnerships; and
- Services and resources available within the jurisdiction of the Local Office.

**Note:** Periods of increased hiring - Secondary units may be necessary during periods of increased hiring depending upon the volume of New Workers assigned to the Unit.

#### **D) New Worker Caseload Assignment & Readiness Assessment Tool (CARAT)**

The CARAT is introduced to the Trainee within the first two weeks of employment. The CARAT is completed by the Field Training Unit Supervisor three times.

The first completion of the CARAT occurs at the end of two months of employment. The second completion occurs at the end of four months (this aligns with the working test period form from Human Resources). The final completion of the CARAT occurs prior to being assigned to a unit.

#### **E) BSW and MSW Internships**

The Field Training Unit is the unit in the Local Office where BSW interns, and possibly MSW interns, are assigned when learning about child welfare and child protective services work.

In situations where the Field Training Unit Supervisor does not possess a **MSW degree, two years of supervisory experience, and has not completed the required seminar in field instruction (SIFI) course (a requirement to supervise MSWs in field placement), he or she will not be able to supervise MSW interns.** In such cases, the Field Training Unit Supervisor and the Local Office Manager discuss options for assigning the MSW intern to another unit. There are no such requirements for supervising a BSW intern.

#### **F) Responsibilities of the Field Training Unit**

The Field Training Unit will:

- Create a learning circle where each New Worker is responsible for sharing and participating in the teaching and learning process;

- Convey a message of commitment to the Division's mission, policies and procedures;
- Identify and strengthen the New Worker's case practice skills;
- Be available and accessible to all unit members If the Supervisor leaves his position, the Office Manager arranges unit coverage by a Supervisor in an "X" or "Y" position. If a covering Supervisor cannot be named, the Casework Supervisor supervises the unit. **See [CP&P-III-C-5-100](#)**, Unit Coverage;
- Ensure the New Worker is afforded the opportunity to experience diverse Division functions including case assignment types, community contacts, Local Office systems, and personnel interactions;
- Coordinate field days that are relevant to, and complement, the Office of Training and Professional Development's curriculum;
- Team the New Worker with different unit activities during the training process Conference each New Worker's caseload on a weekly basis or more often if needed; and
- Conduct joint field visits with the New Worker on a monthly basis to ensure the safety and well-being of the child and his or her family, effective case planning, and accurate assessment of cases for termination.

### **G) Selecting the Field Training Unit Supervisor**

The preference is to select a Supervisor who possesses an MSW degree however this is not an absolute requirement.

In addition to the Civil Service Commission's job specification requirements for a Supervising Family Services Specialist II, consider selecting a Supervisor who has:

- A diverse and extensive child welfare and child protective services background within the Division;
- Extensive knowledge of the Division's policies and procedures;
- Proven mentoring and team building skills;
- The support and respect of the Local Office Manager and other office staff to ensure the integrity of the Field Training Unit and its functions;

- An understanding of, and supportive approach to, the mission of the Division and the goals of the Sustainability and Exit Plan Summary; and
- An aptitude for and interest in patiently developing and nurturing New Workers.

#### **H) Field Training Unit Supervisor**

The Field Training Supervisor will partner with the Office of Training and Professional Development to:

- Ensure the New Worker has an appropriate work station with a computer and user login identification;
- Provide time for completion of Pre-Service Training homework;
- Structure field experiences in alignment with New Worker Pre- Service Training requirements as detailed in the Office of Training and Professional Development Field Guide for New Workers;
- Sign-off **must to be returned to the trainer prior to the beginning of the last module** on completed field experiences as required in the Office of Training and Professional Development Field Guide for New Workers;
- Offer support or coaching in information or skills acquisition;
- Work collaboratively with the Office of Training and Professional Development personnel to address problems as issues arise;
- Participate in regularly-scheduled meetings with the office of Training and Professional Development staff;
- Review and assess periodic feedback and evaluative data reports from the Office of Training and Professional Development regarding the New Worker's performance, behavior, and participation in training courses;

#### **Note: This task is performed by the FTU Supervisor**

- Take corrective action with the New Worker to address inappropriate behaviors in training, if needed. This includes:
  - Addressing the inappropriate behavior with the New Worker and sharing the resolution with the Trainer;

- Advising the New Worker that continuing the inappropriate behavior could result in further corrective and/or disciplinary action, including expulsion from the Training Program, which could jeopardize his or her CP&P employment; and
- Taking disciplinary action if the New Worker's inappropriate behavior continues beyond the initial interventions.
- **Assist the New Worker in scheduling** the required Pre-Service and Foundation Courses once he or she completes the Pre-Service Training;
- Track the New Worker's attendance and completion of both Pre-Service and Foundation courses for the New Worker's first 18 months of employment even if the New Worker moves to a regular unit;

**Note:** If an employee misses a training class, the Office of Training and Professional Development will reschedule the class. If the rescheduled class is missed, it is up to the Assistant Area Director, with the assistance of the local office Field Training Unit Supervisor, to ensure that the New Worker is re-enrolled in the missed class.

- Set up a conference with the New Worker and his or her new Supervisor prior to transferring the New Worker to a permanent unit within the Local Office; and
- Discuss the New Worker's training history, progress, and schedule of remaining Foundation Courses.

**Note:** The Field Unit Supervisor is responsible for conducting field visitation **at a minimum of** once a month with each of his or her Trainees. For the purposes of observation, mentoring, and support - the Field Unit Supervisor is strongly encouraged to have more direct field visitation with the Trainee whenever possible.

## I) Roles and Responsibilities of the New Worker

The roles and responsibilities of the New Worker assigned to the Field Training Unit are as follows:

- Be fully prepared to discuss assigned cases during the case conference;
- Read the case record and ensure face to face contact with the family within designated time frames;
- Maintain the case record and its integrity;

- Provide for, or arrange, services for both child welfare and child protective services cases;
- Conference and investigate all child protective services reports and work with the Field Training Unit Supervisor to assess safety, risk, child and caregiver strength and needs, and to develop investigation conclusions and summaries;
- Develop case plans on all assigned cases and coordinate services on cases as required in conjunction with his or her Supervisor and the family;
- Use the case conferences process to monitor case progress towards completing case goals;
- Actively participate in all aspects of classroom training, on-line training and field related assignments;
- Attend all required formal and informal training, including the formal Office of Training and Professional Development's courses as well as informal training arranged by the Field Training Unit Supervisor;
- Complete all homework and field training unit learning assignments on time;
- Take ownership of own casework skills development and seek supervisory and peer feedback and assistance;
- Become responsible for knowing the Division's policies and procedures;
- Become knowledgeable of human development;
- Complete and update required paperwork and documentation within Division time frames;
- Utilize formal and informal tracking systems to ensure compliance with necessary time frames deadlines; and
- Gain knowledge necessary to use electronic recording and information system.

## **J) Types of Cases that Can be Assigned**

A new Worker may be assigned identified low or moderate risk cases and a very limited number of high risk cases that **do not include sexual abuse or complex factors. The exceptions to this policy include:**

- When an allegation of abuse/neglect is alleged, and the new Worker finds out it is a sexual abuse case, he or she will contact the local office to speak to his or her Supervisor. The Supervisor will assign an experienced Worker to respond and take the lead in completing the investigation.
- If a case has a "history" of sexual abuse which was resolved in the past, and there is a new intake investigation not involving sexual abuse is received, the new Worker can be assigned the case.

The New Worker's caseload must be diverse in population, service needs and procedural content in order to maintain the learning environment. The cases assigned will provide different case situations such as:

- A child in out-of-home placement
- A multi-problem family (e.g., substance abuse, homelessness, etc.)
- A case in litigation

#### **K) Types of Cases Not to Assign**

Under no circumstances will a New Worker be assigned very high risk cases at first. The Supervisor must provide case conferencing and clear directions on all initial and on-going cases assignments to ensure reasonable case handling.

Certain difficult case types are not considered appropriate for assignment during a New Worker's Pre-Service Training period. Obviously, complex cases of sexual abuse and the most difficult physical abuse cases must be reserved for assignment to a more experienced worker rather than a New Worker.

The New Worker is **not**:

- Assigned sexual abuse cases until completing the 8 day sexual abuse training
- Assigned difficult physical abuse cases
- Assigned very high risk or high risk cases involving complex factors which warrants enhanced skill or knowledge levels not yet available to the New Worker
- Able to complete Dodd removals during the first 60 days unless accompanied by an experienced, skilled staff person

Trainees in Pre-Service training are not permitted to complete MVRs alone within their first 60 days of service. See [CP&P-III-C-3-100](#) , Trainees and MVRs.

#### **L) Assignment to a Unit**

The Supervisor, in conjunction with the Casework Supervisor and/or the Local Office Manager, considers several factors when determining the New Worker's readiness for assignment to a Unit. These factors include, but are not limited to, the New Worker's level of performance within the Office of Training and Professional Development and the Field Training Unit based on:

- Events documented in the New Worker's Performance Assessment Review (PAR)
- Progress documented on the New Worker Participation in Training Report provided by the Office of Training and Professional Development
- Strengths and weaknesses observed in the New Worker's job performance and case conference discussions
- Ability to understand, interpret, and apply agency casework policies and procedures
- The passing score on the Family Service Specialist Trainee Caseload Assignment Readiness Assessment Tool (CARAT)
- Previous child welfare/child protective services experience
- Ability to qualify for promotion to a Family Service Specialist (FSS) II based on education and experience and demonstrates the ability to perform FSS II job duties

**Note:** Trainees will be assigned to an Intake, Permanency, Adoption, or Adolescent Unit. Cases will be assigned to Trainee's after he or she completes "Child Development: Identifying Abuse and Neglect" module.

#### **M) Exceptions to Assignment to the Field Training Unit**

A New Worker starting with the Division as a FSS II, based on education and experience outlined in this policy, may be considered for:

- Immediate assignment to a unit other than the Field Training Unit
- An assignment to the Field Training Unit for a period less than the usual six-month period

Under either type of assignment, the New Worker is required to participate in the formal training sessions conducted, or arranged, by the Field Training Unit Supervisor.



**Note:** Exceptions may be considered for a previous CP&P worker returning to the Division within two years. Any exception to assigning a New Worker to the Field Training Unit requires the approval of the Area Director.

#### **N) Timeframes for Gradual Case Assignment**

Cases are assigned gradually to promote learning. Cases are **not** assigned for mere coverage or other operational reasons. The Supervisor begins to assign one to two cases to the new Worker only after he or she has successfully completed the child development module of the Pre-Service training Program. The Supervisor gradually assigns additional cases as appropriate. By the end of the third month of employment, the new Worker may have a total of seven cases, with no more than five children in placement, and no more than twelve children in total.

A new Worker is assigned one or two cases incrementally after completing “Child Development – Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect” module. The new Worker completes this module approximately **eight to nine** weeks after the Pre-Service Training program begins.

#### **O) Four Months to Six Months of Employment**

Beginning the first week of the fourth month, the Supervisor gradually assigns one case per week until the New Worker receives up to eight additional cases. As these new cases are assigned, the New Worker must have no more than 10 children in placement. The gradual assignment is limited to no more than one case per week. Additional cases are assigned to the trainee, on a gradual basis, until the trainee has a full caseload of 15 cases.

#### **P) Six Months and Beyond**

After the sixth month, the Trainee must have a full caseload. The full caseload is **15 families per Worker with no more than ten children in placement.**

#### **Q) Exceptions to Gradual Case Assignment**

In individual situations, the gradual waiving assignment of cases to New Worker may be waived. Exception requests may be granted based on the background, competence, knowledge, and abilities of the New Worker. Some of these exceptions include:

- A former employee returning to CP&P within two years
- A New Worker with several years of child protective service/child welfare experience from another agency/jurisdiction
- A New Worker who successfully completed an internship with the Division, who demonstrated proficiency and skill

- A New Worker with specific educational credentials or specialized training which prepared him or her for child protective service/child welfare service duties
- A New Worker who had been employed by, or worked with, a CP&P contract agency specializing in the provision of child protective services/child welfare services
- A New Worker with related life or work experiences that management views as beneficial in deviating from gradual case assignment

**Note:** Any exception to the gradual assignment system, as explained in this issuance, requires the prior approval of the Area Director.

## **R) Case Coverage During New Worker Trainee Classroom Setting**

If any cases assigned to the New Worker during his or her Pre-Service Training Period or foundation courses, the Supervisor must provide back-up coverage for those cases while the New Worker Trainee attends class. The New Worker Trainee must not be taken away from his or her classroom to perform case management duties.

### **Procedures:**

#### **1) Assigning the New Worker to the Unit**

In the first **six weeks** of employment, the New Worker reports to the Field Training Unit in his or her respective Local Office beginning the first day of work. During the first **twelve to thirteen weeks** of employment, the New Worker's work schedule alternates between training sessions with the Office of Training and Professional Development and field assignments within the Field Training Unit.

**Length of assignment** - A New Worker is assigned to the Field Training Unit for approximately six months.

### **Key Terms (Definitions):**

- **"Field Training Unit"** refers to a unit in the Local Office comprised of a Supervisor and a group of New Workers.
- **"Foundation Courses"** refers to the follow-up in-service programs, administered by the New Jersey Office of Training and Professional Development in the Department of Children and Families, that the New Worker completes during the first 18 months of employment.
- **"New Worker"** refers to a Family Services Specialist Trainee or a new employee hired at the Family Services Specialist II level.

- **"New Worker Training Program"** refers to the 12 to 13 week Pre-Service Training and the follow-up in-service Foundation Courses.
- **"Pre-Service Training"** refers to the 12 to 13 week training program for New Workers administered by the New Jersey Office of Training and Professional Development in the Department of Children and Families.
- **"Supervisor"** refers to a Supervising Family Services Specialist II.
- **"Case Load Assignment Readiness Assessment Tool" (CARAT)** refers to a process that is used by a Trainee's Supervisor to evaluate the new Worker's readiness to assume a full caseload.

### **Forms and Attachments**

- Caseload Assignment Readiness Assessment Tool (CARAT) Purpose and How to Use
- Family Service Specialist Trainee Caseload Assignment Readiness Assessment Tool (CARAT) Chart